

## Race cars and middle Amerika

by Frank Watts

It's indicative of the ineptitude of marketing nabobs at Aurora Film and 20th Century-Fox that such a sure-fire winner as *Heart Like a Wheel* was kept in cinematic limbo for so long.

Completed early last year, the film was quietly withdrawn from selected theatres in the spring, to be finally resurrected at last fall's New York Film Festival. It has since received warm critical approval and has at last found its way to Montréal.

*Heart Like a Wheel* traces the path of drag racer Shirley Muldowney (Bonnie Bedelia) down her obstacle-strewn route to stardom, from her initiation to fast driving on the lap of her father (played by country crooner Hoyt Axton) to her quarter-mile victory in 1980 that garnered a second National Hot Rod Association title. The package has all the winning components: superb action sequences, convincing melodrama, a true-to-life heroine, a decent soundtrack, and an easy, natural pace.

Cashing in on current filmmaking fashions, producer Charles Roven has appropriated relatively recent cinematic styles, and these derivative qualities contribute to the movie's box-office appeal.

The biographical formula is reminiscent of *Coal Miner's Daughter*, which told the story of Loretta Lynn's rise out of the Tennessee backwoods to fame at the Grand Ole Opry. Here, Muldowney escapes the drudgery of waitressing in a Schenectady, N.Y. diner to taste victory on the West Coast.

In its second scene, a 1955 hot rod showdown on a deserted black-top, *Heart Like a Wheel* promises to continue where *American Graffiti* left off, and the soundtrack at least momentarily contributes to this déjà vu atmosphere.

Like modern American films which have begun to adopt pop music as a means to evoke time and setting — a recent example being *The Big Chill*'s use of '60's music to lend it a nostalgic tone — *Heart Like a Wheel* introduces hit songs from different musical eras to mark each passing decade of the heroine's 26-year career. The soundtrack progresses from the '50's *Louie, Louie* into the '60's with *The Byrds' Turn! Turn! Turn!* and *The Turtles' Happy Together*.

One '70's song marks an eventful moment in Muldowney's life. When Axton sings her *You Taught Me How To Cry*, it marks the last time she will see her father alive, apparently the only figure in her life to have encouraged her. The situation seems to switch when the lyrics sound like *You Taught Me How To Drive* with "drive" becoming synonymous with "live."

The film score represents only one aspect of the movie's painstaking attention to detail. From vintage license plates to Doors T-Shirts, from race cars to race tracks, director Jonathan Kaplan displays his caressing devotion to the project. One could almost trace the technological development of the slingshot drag-racing car through the picture's props.

But *Heart Like a Wheel* is not meant to be so much about racing as about a woman making good in a "man's world," a woman who deals with frustration and the endless put-downs of her male counterparts. And this is exactly where Ken Friedman's script falls flat. His characters, including Muldowney, are strictly two-dimensional, drawn without subtlety.

There is a cartoon-like ogresness to Shirley's husband Jack (Leo Rossi) who wants her to abandon racing and keep house for him and her child. The shifts of Connie Kalitta (Beau Bridges) from rival to team-mate to rival again and, off the track, from bemused suitor to encouraging partner to frustrated jock are unaccountable and unconvincing, if not entirely duplicitous.

Even Muldowney, the film's centrepiece, is not fleshed out. The reasons she maintains her determination to fight the chauvinism of the racing world are never clearly detailed. Adding the cardboard characters of track promoters and drivers, the end result is a papier maché world, nice to look at but lacking substance.

Within these stereotypical roles, however, the actors do surprisingly well, especially Beau Bridges who plays an entertaining boor.



The film takes well-warranted pot shots at insensitive broadcasters and uneducated newsmen who marvel, dissimulating snickers, that a woman can succeed in such a predominantly male domain. Yet this exposes the movie to questions running along the same lines. Were one to disregard the gender of its protagonist, would not *Heart Like a Wheel* be just a feature on drag-racing?

Happily, the answer is no. The film does not adequately describe the source of Muldowney's drive to succeed, for its focus is on the impediments placed in her way and on her simple desire to cut the red tape so she can race. Within these limitations, Bedelia convincingly portrays the pugilistic tough-mindedness that Muldowney had to adopt in order to achieve the momentary thrill of a top-speed run.

These action scenes are where the movie excels. Kaplan and his director of photography, Tak Fujimoto, infuse drama into each quarter-mile, stretching the few seconds of Elapsed Time until time is almost suspended, its course altered. It follows that the most successful scene is the fiery night-time crash about mid-way through the film.

*Heart Like a Wheel* addresses the middle-American myth of success: that perseverance and faith in oneself straighten out the road to the top. Its populist image and its adherence to proven formulas have made it a film that the mainstream and its critics can comfortably take to heart.

*Heart Like a Wheel* will have its Montréal "première" next Thursday. The first Montréal première was presented last Friday by the Instructional Communications Centre at McGill.

## Hansel and Gretel

by Peter Tannenbaum

The story of Hansel and Gretel was born of the collective genius of the Grimm brothers; it grew to operatic proportions in the musical imagination of Engelbert Humperdinck (that's the 19th-century composer, not the British pop idol of the blue-rinse, middle-aged set); and last weekend, *Hansel and Gretel* was murdered on stage by the McGill Opera Studio.

There are many elements in opera which give it "entertainment value": singing, orchestral music, drama, costumes and sets, and sometimes some ballet thrown in for good measure. Out of all these facets, you expect that at least one or two would be well-covered in any opera production. Not so with this year's Opera Studio presentation.

It was obvious from witnessing last Saturday's show that the over-riding concern by Opera Studio directors Edith and Luciano Della Pergola was voice production. The working axiom here is that opera should be heard, but not seen.

The outstanding voice of the evening was that of Dominique Labelle, in the role of Gretel. Her intonation was good, her voice strong, her enunciation, though not always clear, was at least clear enough to make her intelligible most of the time.

The other principal

singers (Heike Margolis as Rozina, the witch, and Elizabeth Charlton as Hansel) were no better than average. Elizabeth Bolton (as the mother, Gertrude) acquitted herself well, though there was some weakness in the lower part of her range. Gregory Atkinson, as Peter, the father, sang with force, but was plagued with intonation problems. Diction was poor among all the singers.

The orchestra, under the direction of Richard Hoenich, was lack-lustre. The horns missed cues on several occasions. This kind of sloppiness is unusual for the McGill ensemble. They did not seem to be well rehearsed.

To call the sets, designed by Felicity Blatt, ugly would be charitable. They consisted of poorly drawn backdrops — a forest of a few spindly, dead trees; a ginger-bread house spawned from a surrealist's nightmare — certainly nothing of professional quality.

Last year's production by the McGill Opera Studio of Offenbach's *Tales of Hoffmann* was greatly superior to this year's offering. This is what makes *Hansel and Gretel* doubly disappointing.

At \$10 for the general public, \$5 for students and golden-agers (note that these were limited in number) — a stiff price to pay for a mediocre production.

## the supplement

LADIES, TONIGHT OUR SPEAKER IS THE RENOWNED AUTHORITY ON SMUT, DR. SNARKY SMUT PEETS, LATE OF THE (PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ON FILTH), WHOSE REPORT HE DESCRIBED AS "ANOTHER LOOSELY DISGUISED EXAMPLE OF COMMUNIST VICE BY MEANS OF UNDERCOVER PENETRATION."

AND NOW, LADIES, TO SPEAK ON THE TOPIC: "SEX EDUCATION IN OUR SCHOOLS — MORALITY IN DEFENSE OF IGNORANCE IS NO VICE," HERE IS DR. PEETS, ASSISTED BY HIS FRIEND, RODNEY.

LADIES, RODNEY HERE WAS A FINE BOY, MUCH LIKE YOUR BOYS, UNTIL THE REDS GOT THEIR HANDS ON HIM IN THE SCHOODOOM. RODNEY, WHAT DID YOU LEARN ABOUT IN SCHOOL TODAY?

ANYTHING ABOUT FREEDOM? JEFFERSON? MT. RUSHMORE? WASHINGTON? MARTHA MITCHELL?

TELL ME, RODNEY, WHAT DOES THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE MEAN TO YOU?

I THINK THAT YOUNG MAN HAS BEEN BOILED FROM WITHIN.



Kulcha flash! The Ontario Censor Board says it will not allow the uncut showing of a prize-winning feminist film that portrays women taking power into their own hands to fight violence and oppression. The board ruled last week that the U.S. film, Lizzie Borden's *Born in Flames*, cannot be shown in Ontario unless a short scene showing a condom being rolled onto an erect penis is cut.



# **DON'T MISS THESE WINTER MINI-COURSES**

(Registration now extended till Monday)

Here's a perfect opportunity to learn those skills you've always been wanting to learn. Don't pass up this chance!

**REGISTRATION:** In Union 108 on Thursday, Friday and Monday, February 2nd, 3rd and 6th from 12 noon to 2 p.m. Also at the General Office (Room 105) tonight, February 2nd from 5 to 6 p.m. All fees are payable at registration in cash. Refunds will be given in the case of cancellation of course.

**INFORMATION:** Drop by the Students' Society General Office or call 392-8930 or 392-8922.

**DETAILS:** For full details in all these courses, check yesterday's **DAILY** and this week's **TRIBUNE**.

## **FOLK/ROCK GUITAR**

Instructor: Brenday Banasik

8 sessions in Brontman 651

Fee: \$42 McGill students; \$47 general public

Level I - Section 1: Tuesdays, 6 - 7 p.m.

Level I - Section 2: Tuesdays, 8:30 - 9:30 p.m.

Level II: Tuesdays, 7:15 - 8:15 p.m.

## **DRAWING**

Instructor: Danielle Lamarch-Dazé

6 sessions in Leacock 212

Fee: \$45 McGill students; \$50 general public

Introductory: Tuesdays, 6 - 9 p.m.

## **PHOTOGRAPHY**

Instructor: Stephen Eisenberg

6 sessions in Union B09

Fee: \$32 McGill students; \$37 general public

Level I: Thursdays, 6:30 - 9:00 p.m.

## **CLASSICAL GUITAR**

Instructor: Shawn Bell

8 sessions in Union B09

Fee: \$45 McGill students; \$50 general public

Level I - Section 1: Tuesdays, 1:30 - 2:30 p.m.

Level I - Section 2: Tuesdays, 4:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Level II: Tuesdays, 2:45 - 3:45 p.m.

## **CONTEMPORARY JAZZ DANCE**

Instructor: Deborah Mackenzie

Introductory: Mondays & Wednesdays, 12 noon - 1:30 p.m.

Intermediate - Advanced: Wednesdays, 8:30 - 9:00 p.m.

Workshop: Saturdays, 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Fees: (see detailed ad)

## **KNITTING**

Instructor: Wanda Kaluzny

5 sessions in Union B09

Fee: \$20 McGill students; \$25 general public

Introductory: Wednesdays, 6 - 7:30 p.m.

Intermediate: Wednesdays, 7:45 - 9:15 p.m.

## **WEN-DO WOMEN'S SELF-DEFENSE**

Instructor: Lisa Weintraub

6 sessions in Union 425

Fee: \$40 McGill students; \$45 general public

Introductory: Wednesdays, 7 - 9:30 p.m.

## **EXPRESSIVE EXERCISE**

Instructor: Lorna Kertland

Section 1: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 12:15 noon - 1:15 p.m.

Section 2: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 5:30 - 6:30 p.m.

Section 3: Wednesdays, 10 - 11 a.m. (N.B. Changed from 11 a.m. - 12 noon)

Fee: (prices depend on number of days per week and number of weeks registered for.)

## **CARDIO-PULMONARY RESUSCITATION**

Times, Dates & Fees: call 392-6780



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Dear Thor,

They did it again, those people at *The McGill Magazine* used LAST year's banner in their bash the *Daily* article. I mean, I know that they're suggesting Renaissance solutions to Victorian problems, but couldn't they use the right banner?

Beyond that, how the hell can they have a "Yes Committee" when they haven't even submitted a petition to the DPS Board of Directors? A provisional people's soviet I can understand, but a Yes Committee?

As the god of thunder I have a request to make of you. Couldn't you find the time to direct a few bolts of lightning their way? For old times sake if nothing else.

Love,  
Boris the Kilty

University of Windsor

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# **McGILL WINTER CARNIVAL '84**

## **THURSDAY FEBRUARY 2nd**

McLympics - Surprise Event no 2 - in front of Arts Bldg.

12:00 pm - Slave Auction in Gertrudes (proceeds for CHF)

1:00 pm - McLympics - Tug of War - location TBA

7:00 pm - Movie - Pink Floyd: The Wall - FDAA - \$1.50

8:00 pm - JAZZ, JOKES in THE MITZ WITH THE YUK YUK TOURING SHOW featuring MIKE MACDONALD

Cover: \$2.00 with McGill I.D.

\$3.00 General Public

## **FRIDAY FEBRUARY 3rd**

7:00 am - Ski Day - Buses leave Union for Smugglers Notch Vt.

\$22.00 Downhill - \$16.00 X-Country - includes transportation and lift

Tickets at Sadies

8:00 pm - REGGAE NIGHT in the MITZ

8:00 pm - Cultural Show by ISA

10:00 pm - Dance and Groove to the sound of MESSENJAH

Cover: \$3.50 with McGill I.D.

\$5.00 General Public

## **SATURDAY FEBRUARY 4th**

GRAND FINALE in THE MITZ with THE XMEN  
Cover: \$2.00 with McGill I.D.

\$3.00 General Public

**THE MITZ** will be located on the third floor of The Student Union Building 3480 McTavish

Tickets for all shows in THE MITZ will be on sale at Sadies, the Winter Carnival Booth and the door.

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# Critical kultcha listings critical kultcha listings critical kultcha listings c

by Brendan Kelly  
POP:

**D.O.A.:** Called the best punk band in North America by some, they're also homegrown talent (they hail from Vancouver). They are very political, to the point of having done several benefits for the Vancouver 5.

Joey Shithead is the lead singer of D.O.A., who play fast, a m p h e t e m i n e - l i k e pop — i.e. something like original punk.

You get a free D.O.A. single (*Right to be Wild*) with the \$7.50 ticket. That price is made a lot more digestible both 'cause of the '45 but also since 3 local bands will be supporting D.O.A. — No Policy, SCUM, and the Nils. I've heard that No Policy are a good Johnny Thunders-type hardcore band, SCUM have reportedly improved a lot, and the Nils have been around long enough to be worth seeing as one of the veteran Montréal bands.

In a rock'n'roll desert like Montréal, this is a show not to be missed. It's a veritable Alan Freed-type rock variety concert so be there or be called a □ by all your (cool) friends.

**Tuesday, February 7, 20:00.**  
**At the Church (3767**

**Berri/metro Sherbrooke).**  
**Tickets at Dutchy's, Underground Records or at the door. Info: 288-0578.**

**TALK:**

**Dennis Brutus:** Internationally-known poet, exiled from South Africa, he is also at the forefront of the movement to keep South Africa out of the Olympics. Brutus will be reading from and discussing his work.

**Monday, February 6, 15:00.**  
**The Arts Council Room. Reception will follow. Sponsored by the McGill South Africa Committee.**

**FILM:**

**Alfred Hitchcock:** To paraphrase Andrew Sarris, I also used to feel more like Hitchcock than supporting Hitchcock. But after seeing *Rope* (innovative technique but less than great film), *Vertigo* (an incredibly emotional movie for Hitchcock but also a really tense suspense intrigue) and *Rear Window* (probably the best Hitchcock I've seen, it's a wonderful comedy/murder story in a claustrophobic setting), I'm coming to believe he actually deserves all the critical and popular adulation he gets.

**Rear Window** is still on at Cinéplex and is more than worth

seeing because:

a) James Stewart and Grace Kelly work together perfectly as an ill-suited couple — Stewart is at his ingenuous best as Kelly is at her most sensuous;

b) it's the funniest Hitchcock film this side of North by Northwest; and c) the well-thought-out direction captures, with much attention to detail, the microcosmic social milieu of the apartment block where Stewart is stuck with his broken leg.

Also this Friday, you can see Gregory Peck (who is hilarious) and Eva Saint-Marie in *North by Northwest*. Perhaps most interesting for its almost total lack of suspense, this is Hitchcock comedy at its most absurd. The film ends up in the North Western U.S. just so we can have some cliff-hanging on Mount Rushmore (which is actually funnier than it is scary).

**(Presented by the McGill Film Society in Leacock 132, at 19:00 and 21:30. \$2.00.)**

On Monday, another Cary Grant/Hitchcock collaboration, *Notorious*, is on. It's about secret agents in South America and also features Ingrid Bergman.

**At the Seville (2155 Ste. Catherine St. W.) at 19:00.**

**Peter Watkins:** Best known for the *War Game*, which won an Academy Award as best documentary in 1966, the Conservatoire is holding a retrospective of this outcast-director's work starting this Saturday with his film-bio *Edvard Munch* (21:00) on the Norwegian artist.

Watkin's stylistically innovative fictional documentary *Culloden*, about Bonnie Prince Charles' rebellion against the English, is screening on Sunday at 20:00. As effective an anti-war film as his most celebrated work, *Culloden* looks as if it were filmed by a newsreel team who were

there to chronicle the fight between Cumberland's British Army and the clan army.

On Wednesday, Watkins will be present for a benefit screening of *Punishment Park* (20:30) to raise money for his next project, *The Nuclear War Film*.

Next Thursday at 20:00 is the *War Game* — perhaps the best no-nukes statement on celluloid.

**At the Conservatoire (1455 de Maisonneuve/metro Guy).** \$1.75, except for *Punishment Park* which is \$3.00 for students and senior citizens, \$4.00 for the general public. Telephone: 879-4349.

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## CLASSIFIEDS

Ads may be placed through the Daily, Room B03, Student Union Building, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Deadline is 2:00 p.m. two weekdays prior to publication.

McGill students: \$2.50 per day; for 3 consecutive days, \$2.00 per day; more than 3 days, \$1.75 per day. McGill faculty and staff: \$3.50 per day. All others: \$4.00 per day. **Exact change only, please.**

The Daily assumes no financial responsibility for errors, or damage due to errors. Ad will re-appear free of charge upon request if information is incorrect due to our error. The Daily reserves the right not to print a classified ad.

**341 — APTS., ROOMS, HOUSING**

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**Young man** is looking for an apartment to share — starting Feb. 9. Please call Rubens — 285-0024 days or eves.

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**Experienced photographer** required — for modelling session — phone Mark 844-9684.

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**Willing females** for student haircuts. \$5.00 — Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 5 p.m., at Estetica 2195 Crescent call 849-9231.

**361 — ARTICLES FOR SALE**

**Booksale** at NO EXIT bookshop, 3636 St. Laurent. From Feb 1st — Feb 4th. 25% off all English stock. French books half price.

**For sale:** Smith-Corona electric typewriter in perfect working condition. Price negotiable. Please call 933-5250, after 8 pm.

**Army wool berets** red, black, maroon reg 16.00 special \$10.00 during one week sale EXXA 1210 St Denis, 1477 Mansfield.

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**Wanted:** Sturdy, athletic, reliable, old manual typewriter. Preferably vintage Olympia model. Must be in impeccable working condition. Please call 8 AM or after 8 PM. 933-5250.

**370 — RIDES**

**Needed** to the 'Police' concert in Anchorage, Alaska on Feb 23rd. Will pay for gas, tools, and tires. Please contact room 634 Molson Hall or call 285-0225 and ask for OP. (desperate).

**372 — LOST & FOUND**

**Lost:** a very small blue case with a pair of contact lenses inside. If found, please phone 286-0269.

**Found** — 1 scarf in Leacock on Fri at 1:00 pm. 1 leather cap in the same building & time. 1 pair of women's gloves in F.D.A. building. To claim — call 695-8731 after 4:30 pm and ask for Doug.

**Lost antique Victorian paste brooch** with blue stone between Pine near University and McLennan Library via campus. Great sentimental value. Reward; please call Christine if found 932-0634 or messages only 932-0016.

**374 — PERSONAL**

**ARR BILLY,** have ye ever seen some Swashbucklin' Pirates in action? Dial-a-Pirate (392-8983) — If ye dare!

**Dear Godmother,** I have something great for you to wear to the Grad. Have a great day on the 4th! Love Mercedes (and we at no. 4)

**385 — NOTICES**

**ARE EMOTIONS** making your life unmanageable? Try Emotions Anonymous, Wednesday evenings, 7:45, at the Erskine and American Church, 3407 Du Musée at Sherbrooke West.

**SKI MT TREMBLANT** Friday Feb 10th for only \$20. Includes lift ticket, return transportation and Bagel Breakfast. Limited seats. Contact Warren — lunches in Bronfman lobby or call 286-1318.

**387 — VOLUNTEERS**

**Volunteers needed** for the Cerebral Palsy Telethon Feb 4th & 5th at Complex Desjardins. Contact Community McGill Union 408 or phone 392-8937 for more info.

**All those interested** in volunteering in prison please come to meeting 4 pm Thurs. Feb. 2; Rm 3, 1215 Visitation St. (Beaudry Metro). For info call Paul 738-2982.

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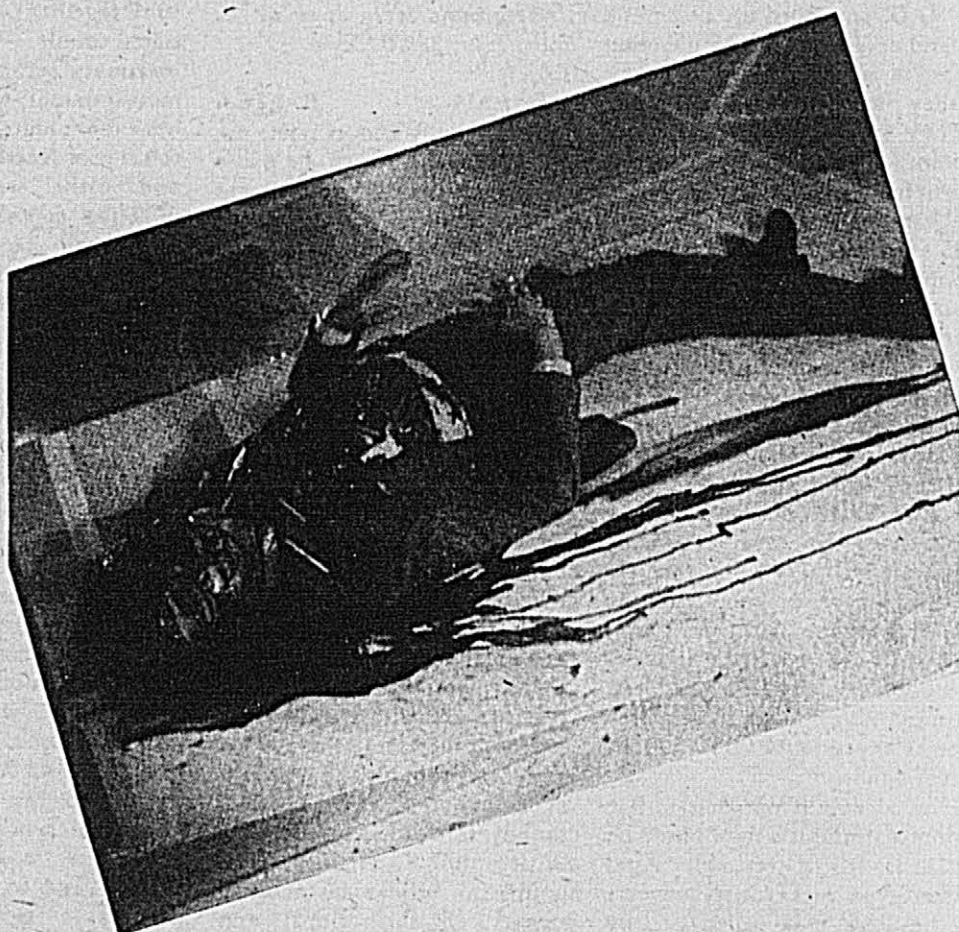
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# Populist pop lives in 1983, O.K.



by Greer Nicholson

The great thing about music in 1983 wasn't the Police, Michael Jackson or Culture Club. Established groups and artists kept doing what they do best. They wrote catchy, best-selling singles and albums you could dance to.

If you wanted to, you could think that the songs were profound and meaningful, although a good definition of "karma chameleon" evades me. The Police hit new heights of pretension by naming an album after a Carl Jung book. David Bowie bounced back to chart life, although I would question the sanity of the Rolling Stone critic who tied *China Girl* to "a quest for political unity."

The great thing about 1983 was the energy and drive of different beats that were brought together. A song might start out with a funk beat, go into sixties-style rock, run through heavy metal and end up on a folksy note.

1983 brought a bumper crop of musical experiments. Many were great musical fusions. Some fell flat on their faces. The English Beat split up and are missed. *Combat Rock*, however, did credit to neither 1982's discovery of funk nor to the Clash's new wave roots.

It is unspeakably trendy to be intellectual when writing about popular music. That simply won't do. It doesn't do justice to anyone.

The volleys of music critics fall on deaf ears. The fact is, most established music critics are either fanzine types, who sell the one or two groups they drool over to the public, or else they're old.

I don't mean chronologically old. They're just stuck in another era. They can't seem to grasp the basic fact that music, in 1983, is recreational, not socially relevant in a sixties way.

It's not useful to take potshots at *Billie Jean* or *Beat it*. They're danceable. Granted, the lyrics don't make you stare into space thinking allegedly cosmic thoughts, but who cares? Music didn't die with Janis Joplin, Jim Morrison or Jimi Hendrix. Songs just changed a lot.

New wave groups changed and came of age in 1983. They produced some of their best music ever, being willing to take risks with alternative styles.

Everyone has their own candidates for best (and worst) albums of the year, so here goes a highly personal series of choices.

XTC produced the controversial *Mummer* album. I love it. Sure, critics said that it "patronised Third World music", but how can you trust anyone who thinks the last good album made was *Sergeant Pepper*? *Mummer* is probably the closest that an audience saturated with Michael Jackson will ever get to African music. Popularizing a style that isn't part of your culture always raises emotionally loaded issues. There are Rolling Stones fans who think *Carol* is the blues, that being the closest to the blues they'll ever get.

The Fixx's *Reach the Beach* is a truly excellent album with at least three perfect songs to its credit. *One Thing Leads to Another* and *f2* by Zero have been played to death on the radio, yet the singing and musicianship stand up to the test of time.

Men Without Hats put out *Rhythm of Youth*. It's a real tribute to *Safety Dance* that it remains danceable, despite serious over-exposure and attempts to describe each musical note in intricate detail. Every DJ in Montréal felt obliged to state that these were hometown boys. Does anyone point out that Michael Jackson is American? Does it matter?

The Tears for Fears album, *The Hurting* took some interesting directions in music. It had pretentious moments and was, arguably, more derivative than original. However, it has the real advantage of doubling as background music when your parents visit.



Big Country's album *The Crossing* is great music from start to finish. Okay, it isn't authentic Celtic music, but it brings traditional folk and new wave rhythms together.

X's album *More Fun in the New World* gave their fans more of their compulsive style. Both their albums were produced by Ray Manzarek (of the Doors) proving that he recognizes what is up and coming and can discover and nurture new talent. Their first album was good, but this one's even better. The meaningful lyrics brigade can even find true happiness here.

Rough Trade put out *Weapons*. The cover art shows many well-oiled human body parts to thrill voyeurs in the record-buying public. Despite that, it's a good, tight album. It's a shame that Carole Pope and Kevan Staples saw fit to slam their origins in *Paisley Generation*.

Those rockers they put down so beautifully made this band's popularity possible. Rough Trade's success, after years of work, is heartening, although some of their best old songs have been dropped from concerts forever.

Everyone has raved about U2 and it's difficult to find anything new to say about their music. They produce good albums. Anyone who can write a danceable tune about Bloody Sunday has something special going for them.

INXS (In Excess) released a truly marvellous album called *Shabooh Shoobah*. It's an easy album to criticise; at times it's sexist, stereotypical and derivative. Many people I respect tell me I mustn't like it and that I'll grow out of it. But it's like chocolate. I love it even if it's bad for me. It's compulsive dance music with excellent singing and musicianship.

UB40 continue to put out music that's impossible to dislike.

According to many people, Rick James is easy to dislike. His funk is sassy, sexy, silly and great. He makes a shambles out of standard attitudes to sex in music and refuses to be low-key or dignified. He is outrageous and truly wonderful. (I told you this was all biased.)

For some of us, the highlight of the American Music Association Awards wasn't Michael Jackson. It was the Mary Jane girls (women?) pushing Rick James out of the way and claiming a place in front of him on stage. That alone was worth the hours and hours of gushing that accompany awards shows. The dancing should have driven the Solid Gold "dancers" to suicide.

Prince and Eddy Grant released superb albums. I don't like Lionel Richie, but my feet move suspiciously when *All Night Long* is played. But my feet do the same thing with *Beat It* — so clearly they don't care about lyrics. Oh, well.

Def Leppard and Quiet Riot continued the heavy metal revival. I have a soft spot for heavy metal, so I'll say nothing more about that movement.

Yes, Genesis and the Rolling Stones proved that it's possible to rock on long after your hair and waistline are only memories.

An incredible amount of good music was produced from beginning to end of 1983. So far, 1984 looks just as good, no matter what anyone might think.



by Brian Walker

Milan Kundera is certainly the best known modern Czech writer. His novel *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* became a best-seller in America and France a couple of years ago and its unexpected success thrust his work out of its undeserved obscurity into relative popularity. Since then most of his works have been republished in paperback by Penguin. The latest one published is *The Joke*, Kundera's first novel.

Kundera was born in Brno in 1929 and so he was just in his late teens during the optimistic (few) days after the war, when the Communist Party was seen to be the great hope of the future. He joined the Party in the late '40's only to be expelled a few years later when the party was "purifying" itself. He worked as a laborer and in a jazz band (his father had been a leading Czech musician) and finally as a teacher at the Prague Institute for Advanced Cinematographic Studies.

*The Joke* was published during the liberalization of the late '60's, but when the Soviet Union invaded in 1968 Kundera's writing was banned, and in 1970 he was expelled from the Party for the second time. He emigrated from Czechoslovakia in 1975, and has been living in Paris ever since.

At first I approached *The Joke* through the filter of Kundera's later work and I was a bit disappointed, for it lacks the light feeling that most of his recent work has. But once I managed to step from behind my expectations and look at the book as if it were by an author that I'd never heard of before — in other words, as a 1967 Czech audience would have looked at it — I was very impressed. As a first novel, *The Joke* is indeed magnificent.

It takes place during the Stalin years, and like most novels about

the period, the world it describes is fairly grim. It is the seriousness of official life that Kundera resents most, and his characters come to grief when they forget the humourlessness of the system that surrounds them.

The hero of *The Joke*, Ludvik, sends a postcard to his girlfriend Marketa who is away at a two week training session for young Communist Party members. He had planned to spend the two weeks alone with Marketa, putting their relation on a more solid footing, and he was more than a little riled when he received a letter from her "chock full of earnest enthusiasm for everything around her; the early-morning calisthenics, the talks, the discussions, even the songs they sang. She praised the 'healthy atmosphere' that reigned there and diligently added a few words to the effect that the revolution in the West would not be long in coming."

In a fit of pique Ludvik dashes off a postcard to her with the message: "Optimism is the opium of the people! A healthy atmosphere stinks of stupidity! Long live Trotsky!"

This little joke costs Ludvik his membership in the Communist Party, (of which he was an eager member), his girlfriend, and his university career. He ends up doing time in the mines of the dreary provincial town of Ostrava. Stuck in the mines, he plots the revenge he will have on the head of the student tribunal that sentenced him.

Ludvik's plans for revenge push him into more and more humiliating situations, and the story is above all about his gradual ascent to self-knowledge. Kundera gives us several different views of Ludvik — Ludvik's own, that of two old friends, and that of his arch-enemy Zemanek. The four voices ravel in and out around each other, and you can see even here, the technical prowess that will make the later Kundera so fascinating.

Ludvik is not an entirely loveable character, although he is the only one in the book who reaches a state of authenticity. What I found detestable about Ludvik, and many of Kundera's other male characters, was his tendency to see women as ex-

isting only from the neck down. I'm not sure whether it is Kundera himself who is a raging sexist, or if it's just his

characters, but I do know that he lays on the old Czech *machismo* a bit too thick.

All of Kundera's books are about laughter and forgetting, *The Joke* being no exception. As Ludvik gradually comes to a knowledge of himself, he also realizes the importance of attaching himself to his culture, of not forgetting. For Kundera, "the struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting." The past serves his characters as a ballast to keep them from being tipped over and crushed by the systems that attempt to uproot and manipulate them.

Laughter is what holds his characters upright; it is only when they learn to laugh in the right way that they finally understand what is happening to them. Kundera supplies us with a typology of laughter — laughter as mask, as barricade, as weapon, laughter as celebration. And if more often than not Kundera's laughter is cruel and mocking, then it serves to make all the more beautiful the times when his laughter is gentle and ironic.



# A writer from the other Europe Kundera:

## The great debating tournament

by Jenny Beeman

One hundred and ten debating teams from over thirty five universities across Canada, the U.S. and Great Britain will descend on McGill today.

The McGill Debating Union is hosting "the largest parliamentary debating tournament in the history of this planet," according to debator John McLaren.

"It's reputation precedes it," said debator Melanie Garrett to explain the increased turn-out

compared to previous years. This tourney is the thirty-fifth annual Winter Carnival Tournament. "We knew it was going to be big, but not this big," she said.

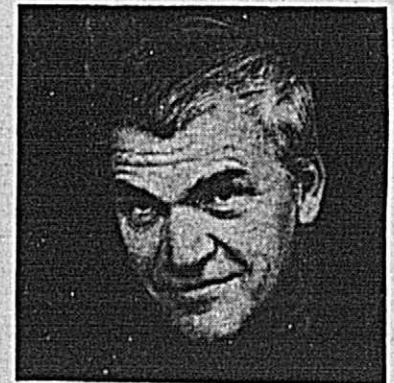
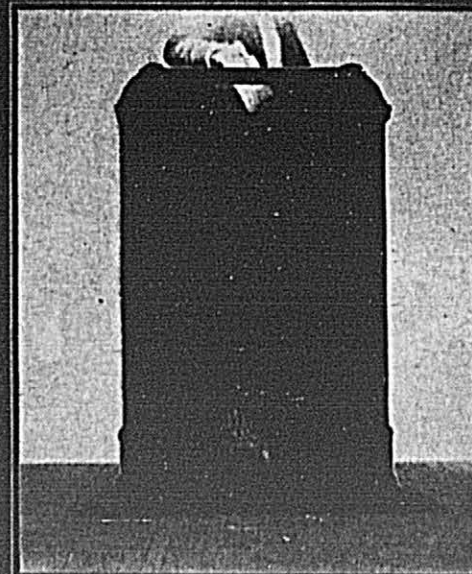
Garrett said, "We'll be able to handle the load this year, but if its growth continues like this, we won't be able to next year."

However, the McGill D.U. has already been chosen to host the "World's" tournament next year during the study break.

Writers from the Other Europe  
General Editor: PHILIP ROTH

**MILAN KUNDERA**

A novel by the author of *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*



*The Joke* and the rest of Milan Kundera's books have been published in the Penguin Writers of the Other Europe series, a collection of books devoted to writers from Eastern Europe — "the invisible politburo of the last people who suffer insomnia in those sleeping countries" (as Tadeusz Borowski wrote in his latest book).

Anything that Kundera writes is worth reading, and even if *The Joke* isn't as accomplished as his most recent work, it's still better than most of the stuff in the bookstores these days.





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# TODAYS

**Lesbian and Gay Friends of Concordia** — presents two films — *Born in Flames* and *A Comedy in Six Unilateral Acts*. These films will be shown today in room H-937, Hall Building, Concordia from 16h-18h00. Donation. All welcome.

**McGill Film Society** — presents with Winter Carnival Committee, *Pink Floyd The Wall* in FDAA at 19h00. \$1.50.

**Project Ploughshares** — study group on the "Effects of Radiation and Related Topics" in room 425 Student Union 19h00. All welcome.

**Centenary Committee** — meeting today in room 213, Dawson Hall at 16h00. All welcome.

**Semaine d'Information Anti-Apartheid Awareness Week** — talk on the economics of Apartheid by Prof. Allen Fenichel, Union 310, 13h30.

**Panel Discussion on Divestment** — with professors Sam Noumoff, John Shingler, and Charles Taylor of McGill, and Prof. Chengliang Ragaven of Concordia. Union 310 at 16h30.

**Winter Carnival Tournament** — Judges needed for international debating tournament. Stop by B-16 between 11h00 and 15h00 for more info. Judges training session in Union 310 at 13h30.

**Department of English** — presents the film *Poetry in Motion* today at 16h00 in FDA auditorium. \$2.00.

**Canadian Studies Student Asso.** — general meeting on "what do you want your compulsory seminar to be?" Meeting Monday 6th at 17h00 room 411 Leacock.

**FRIDAY**  
**Winter Carnival Tournament** — Judges register at Leacock 132 at 9h15. Continental breakfast will be served.  
**Semaine d'Information Anti-Apartheid Awareness Week** — 12h00 — talk on women in South Africa by Stephanie Urdang. Union 310, 19h00 — talk by Jabu Duve of the African National Congress. Film "The Sun Will Rise" Union 310, 21h00 — Pot luck supper.

**SATURDAY**  
**McGill Film Society** — presents *American Werewolf in London* in Leacock 132. Films 19h30 and 21h30.

**Winter Carnival Tournament** — Judges register at Leacock 132 at 9h15. Continental breakfast will be served.

**Supplement meeting on Friday at 13:00.** Come insult the staff. A reaction to insult-the-editor meetings.

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## DR. ROSEMARY RADFORD REUTHER, LIBERATION THEOLOGIAN & AUTHOR

**TOPIC:** "THE CHALLENGE OF FEMINIST THEOLOGY in the CONTEMPORARY CHURCHES"

**DATE:** Monday, February 6

**TIME:** 8:15 p.m.

**PLACE:** McGill University, Leacock Hall, Room 26

**EVENT:** "A MASS IN HONOUR OF WOMEN" followed by a lecture

**TOPIC:** "FEMINISM, SOCIALISM AND CHRISTIANITY: CONFLICT OR CORRELATION?"

**DATE:** Tuesday, February 7

**TIME:** 12:00 Noon

**PLACE:** Loyola Chapel, Concordia University, 7141 Sherbrooke

Dr. Reuther will also preach at the Morning Prayer Service Tuesday, February 7, 8:30 a.m. at McGill University Chapel, 3520 University (above Milton)



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